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Dr. William Davidson came to Wisconsin Territory in 1828 and lived close to my father's home. He also discovered in 1830 one of the large bodies of lead ore. His principal occupation all of his lifetime was mining, although he used to pull teeth, bleed, and dispense calomel and other early-day medicine, and many an old settler has been the victim of his "pullicans" and bleeding methods. He was frequently a guest at our table for Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners.<sup>4</sup>

Another famous character who lived near my father's farm was a Mr. James Clark, who was nick-named "Boots." He was killed in his cabin by another miner, named Kerns, during the course of a heated political argument. Kerns was arrested, tried, and acquitted. It was shown in his trial that "Boots" was a bad man generally and always carried a bowie knife, and some witnesses were introduced who showed wounds which they had received in encounters with "Boots" and his famous bowie knife. Mr. Clark had no relatives in this part of the country. My father discovered a body of lead ore and called it "Boots Range" because "Boots" had his cabin on this range.

## PLATTEVILLE IN ITS FIRST QUARTER CENTURY

TRUMAN O. DOUGLASS

My biography can be written in three sentences: born in Illinois; raised in Wisconsin; lived in Iowa. California is simply a remnant, and doesn't count.

On my father's side I belong to the innumerable Douglas clan of Scotland, and on mother's side to the prolific McCord family of Protestant Ireland. Both families settled in the South. Father was born in middle Tennessee in 1812, and mother in Bond County, Illinois, in 1817. Shortly

<sup>4</sup> Dr. William Davidson wrote his reminiscences for the Society. These are published in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, v, 317-320.

before her birth, in 1816, a colony of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, grandfather Robert McCord the patriarch of the company, moved from Tennessee to escape the influences of slavery, although some of them had made merchandise of human flesh. They settled at Bethel, near Greenville, the county seat. Here father and mother were married February 19, 1833, Rev. Albert Hale, a member of the Yale band of Illinois and a home missionary pastor, officiating. Here, too, I was born May 3, 1842. The same year my people moved to Platteville, Wisconsin, and this was counted my home for a quarter of a century.

I never lived in the village of Platteville but grew up in the country near by. Great multitudes drifted in with us to the lead regions about Galena. Galena in those days was a rival of Chicago, and had the prospect of becoming the great metropolis of the Middle West. I think we selected Platteville as our place of residence because Rev. Alvon Dixon, mother's nephew by marriage, was then in charge of the Academy recently established.

The *American Home Missionary Magazine*, about the best history of the Middle West, gives us glimpses of Platteville as it was when we arrived. In the April number of 1840 we have the following:

Platteville is near the Little Platte River, some sixteen or eighteen miles from the Mississippi, having a small mill stream on one side and an extensive forest of hardwood timber on the other, with prairie all around, and rich beds of lead ore under the soil in all the surrounding country. There are therefore at this place all the facilities for a flourishing town—the most so of any in the western part of Wisconsin. The only church organization has been a Methodist Society, strong and numerous, until a few months ago when a Presbyterian Church of twelve members was formed by Rev. Messrs. Hale and Kent.<sup>5</sup> The Methodists have a convenient, and even for this country, an elegant church, with basement rooms for a school or academy, now consisting of about 130 pupils of both sexes and of all ages. The teacher, Mr. A. M. Dixon, a graduate of Jacksonville College, is one of the elders of the infant Presbyterian Church. I may add that the present population

<sup>5</sup> Albert Hale was from Bethel, and Aratus Kent, coming to Galena in 1838, was for over forty years pastor there and did missionary work in all the region round about.

on a mile square is perhaps 400—so that it is not a paper town, many of which sort are exhibited at the East, and are likely to exist a long time only on paper. The town has the reputation and appearance of being healthy, abounding in springs and streams of water in hill and dale, the village being mostly on the eminence.

Here is a picture of Platteville in 1842:

\* This place contains 800 inhabitants, and is located about twenty-five miles from Galena, and the same distance from Dubuque. There are here facilities for a flourishing inland town. The Church was formed by Rev. Messrs. Kent and Hale about three years ago. The church is exerting itself to erect a building to be occupied both as a place of worship and an academy. It is expected that this building will be completed the present autumn. Mr. Dixon, who now supplies the pulpit, having devoted himself particularly to the interests of education, will then take charge of the academy with from 70 to 100 pupils. Of course an efficient minister will be needed for the congregation. There will be work enough in the vicinity for two or three ministers.

Mr. Dixon reports for the Church:

During the past nine months there has been an increase of religious feeling. Fifteen have been added to the Church. The congregation has been doubled. The Church now numbers 57 members. Almost everything that is done in a pecuniary way, goes into the building which is nearly finished.

A belated report was published in 1844. The *Missionary* says:

The cause of the delay of this report is the existence of the smallpox in an epidemic form in our village; we have been and are being most severely and dreadfully scourged with it. It commenced in this village Oct. 28th [1843] in very mild form, and continued such for a considerable length of time, so that four weeks elapsed before any of our physicians discovered its true character so as to venture to call it by its true name; and another week passed before they could be persuaded of it. No deaths occurred until Dec. 6th, since when it has been very fatal. All business is at a standstill; the schools are suspended; and places of worship are nearly deserted. The whole village is affected with the disease. Fifteen, who a few days since were among us in all buoyancy of spirits and of life, now lie beneath the turf. What the end will be, God only knows. The disease stole in among us in so mild a shape that almost the whole community were fully exposed to its contagion before they were aware of the danger. When the alarm came it was too late to flee or take measures in self defence. The vaccine matter imposed upon us proved to be no protection, and was worse than none. May Heaven dispose this people to profit by this severe judgment.

We spent the first winter in a double log house a short distance from the village. This was our welcome to Platteville. Often did I hear my father tell of that fearsome winter. At times he was utterly homesick and discouraged. I grew up with those whose faces were pocked and pitted in this dreadful scourge.

In the spring of 1844 we moved out into the big timber six miles to the northwest, and there began the attempt to grub out a forty-acre farm, destroying enough of wood to serve almost a township. My earliest recollections are of a log cabin sixteen feet square, with puncheon floor, in the midst of the black stumps of this timber farm. The fireplace was built of sticks and mud. The shake roof was weighted down with logs and stones. The door had wooden hinges and a wooden latch, and the latch string was out all the time to neighbors and to strangers. I really pity anybody who never lived in a log house and does not know what this "latch string out" signifies of frontier hospitality. In that one room were six of us, and beds and a table, all the cooking outfit, and a spinning wheel and a loom—and sometimes we had company. The hired man had to sleep in a straw stack.

My only association with Platteville while we lived in the timber was in the church on the Sabbath day. The twelve miles in a lumber wagon was something of a journey, but our people had been brought up to attend church and they continued to do so now. The meeting house of those days was a room in the old Academy building, and Rev. John Lewis was the home missionary pastor.

But the timber home was too far from church, and our people could not long endure separation from kindred and friends. Both father and mother had the clan instinct fully developed. Four years of this isolation was sufficient. During this time a number of the Bethel community, including uncle James B. McCord, had settled at Limestone, on

Limestone Creek, among the limestone quarries one and one-half miles west of the town.<sup>6</sup> Thither late in 1847 we moved, and this was my home until I went to college in 1861.

For the first years of our residence at Limestone my associations with Platteville continued to be confined almost wholly to church attendance. Almost the whole neighborhood went to meeting in the village. The hitching-posts around the meeting house were all occupied in those days. We did not care much for the Platteville society. We were sufficient in ourselves and quite self-satisfied. Were we not more pious than were the town people? Did we not send five young men into the ministry while Platteville sent only one?<sup>7</sup> Were we not all abolitionists and prohibitionists? And then was not a Lodgeman in the neighborhood; were we not equal to the town folks in intelligence? Did we not take the *Ladies Magazine* and the *National Era*, in which *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was first published? Did not our log schoolhouse, with its slab desks and benches, soon develop into a large stone structure with modern furnishings? Under the tuition of our able teachers did not a number of us only by a little "fall below Demosthenes and Cicero?" Did we not excel in music, with our tuning fork and violin and clarionet and splendid voices? Deacon McCord turned up his nose at the tuning fork but I must relate that at times he would back up and start again, although usually he would strike the key note at the first trial. We had sufficient social life among ourselves. We had our social

<sup>6</sup> Limestone Hollow is one mile north of the city, on the east side of Little Platte River. Lime kilns, stone quarries, brick yards, and turning mills were operated there. There was also a sawmill and later a woolen mill on Platte River near the mouth of Limestone Creek. A stone school building stood on the north side of the valley. It was abandoned in 1877. Many laborers were employed in this valley. They owned and cultivated little plots of ground around their homes, which were situated between this valley and the city.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Douglass mentions that five young men from the valley entered the ministry. That number is now increased to seven by the addition of Rev. Francis Kehoe and Rev. James Kehoe, Catholic missionaries, of whom the former is now a missionary in India, to which place the latter will soon follow him.

gatherings, our spelling schools, our debating societies, our charade parties, etc., etc. And we had our own Sunday school and neighborhood prayer meetings. We were not very refined; we had most of the crudities of a frontier settlement. Our men were sometimes rough in speech, and our boys followed the example of their elders. Our women were very homely in their virtues, and our young ladies were some of them rude and some of them were prudes; but on the whole we were a fine bunch of people, and we needed not to seek our well-being in the society of the village.

When I was old enough to go to town on errands, I came in contact with the "seamy side" of Platteville life. "Grocery Street" was given up to grogeries. I often saw men reeling on the streets or lying in the gutters. I met men on the road, homeward bound, running their horses at the top of their speed and shouting with all the strength of their voices. Now and then some poor fellow would fall out and break his neck or some of his bones. Well do I remember when Pat was pitched into the Platte. I heard his call for help; when we fished him out he was almost sober, but not quite.

Sometimes the young hoodlums of the town called me "Country Jake." Considering the source I did not care much for that. Well do I remember my supreme disgust when two distinguished men—great babies!—complained that when they first came to this country they were called "Dutch" and "Sheeny," and "the iron entered into my soul!" each said. I was ashamed of them both for their unmanly whining. I think I rather enjoyed the doggerel which the town boys sometimes sang to me:

Abolition Hollow; ten feet wide;  
Nigger in the middle, and a McCord on each side.

This was a faint echo of the feeling of some of the people toward our Puritanical neighborhood. But these whisky

shops and this harmless hoodlum element were not the real Platteville. The real Platteville was the churches; the Academy; the honorable business and professional men of the town; "The Beloved John" [Lewis] of the Congregational Church, and his wife Electa Page, and Mr. Pickard of the Academy, and the scores of good men and women who worked and prayed for the moral and spiritual well-being of the community, and for the uplifting of men the world around. This was the real Platteville, and its ideals were more and more realized as the years went by.

Of course the Platteville of our days was a mixed multitude. There were Yankees—not very many of them—and a few New Yorkers. The English were a good deal in evidence, and there were many Germans. We called them all Dutch in those days. There were a good many Southerners—some of them of "the first families of Virginia," but more of them had simply passed through the South on their way from Scotland and Ireland; and there were also many Catholic Irish. Limestone at length was captured by these people, and the schoolhouse and the mill pond and the prayer meeting disappeared.

The nativity of people is to a considerable extent manifest in the churches to which they belong. The Methodist Church of Platteville was composed of all sorts and conditions of men. The Presbyterian, organized in 1839, became Congregational in 1849 because our people, Scotch-Irish, were outnumbered by the New Englanders. The English, of course, must have their Primitive Methodist Church; and the Germans divided into Presbyterian and Lutheran camps. Late in the day some of the English and some of our United States people united in forming the Episcopal Church. All these and perhaps other churches were in Platteville in my day.

As a matter of course, as the years went by, I got more and more into the social life of the village. Now and then I



attended a lecture or a concert in the town, and I attended the Academy, though irregularly because father was in ill health, and I, the oldest son, was needed at home. But in one way and another I became acquainted more and more with the young people of the town, homes were open to me and I ventured to call at a few places. There was one house especially that I passed by more often than was really necessary, and a few times I knocked at the door, and, only once, sat at the table with the family. So, at last, Platteville became dear to me as the home of a good many friends—one of them the best friend “in all the world to me.”

Maria Greene, of English ancestors on both sides of the house, both families coming to America in the seventeenth century, was born at Richmond, Ontario County, New York, September 10, 1843. She was the daughter of Benoni Greene and Oracy Clark. In 1855, at the age of twelve, she came with a remnant of the family to Platteville. She graduated from the Academy, from the Albany Normal School, took a course in the Oswego training school, and was a teacher for two years in Philadelphia. In 1868, at the age of twenty-five, she was a little body weighing less than one hundred pounds, with brown hair, brown eyes, and brown cheeks. Her dress, showing the characteristics of her mind and heart, was always simple and of quiet colors. She was unassuming, sober-minded, serious, conscientious even to a fault, studious, industrious, and ready for every duty or sacrifice life might have in store for her. But, withal, she had a mind and will of her own, and some shades and tinges of radicalism, the product of heredity and environment, for she was born and brought up in the midst of anti-slavery, anti-saloon, anti-Masonic, anti-Mormon, and other anti-agitations of the middle decades of the last century, and her father took radical grounds on all these questions. We were married at Platteville June 25, 1868, Rev. J. E. Pond, the pastor of

the church, performing the ceremony. We took a short wedding trip and then began at Osage, Mitchell County, a life of fifty years in Iowa. Four years ago we observed our golden wedding.

## PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF PLATTEVILLE

MARIA GREENE DOUGLASS

As I sit at my desk there is before me the portrait of a man in the prime of life, of large frame, broad shoulders, wide brow crowned with an abundance of dark hair, a well formed nose, firm mouth, and dark beard. The outstanding of the features are the dark, full, kindly, piercing eyes. When fixed upon one they seem to penetrate to one's inmost being, "discerning even the thoughts and intents of the heart." Such was the outward appearance of one of the great educators of the Middle West in the last half of the nineteenth century, Josiah Little Pickard.

Born in 1824 in New England, where his early life was spent and where he was educated, his life service was given to the Middle West, and his last years were spent in California, whence he departed this life in 1914, a noble Christian man and educator, the impress of whose life was left upon many thousands of young men and young women. No one could fail to be a better man or woman from having come in contact with this great-hearted friend.

I first met Mr. Pickard when I was at the age of twelve. My parents, with their minor children, moved from western New York to the young state of Wisconsin in the autumn of 1855, and settled at Platteville, Grant County, in the southwest corner of the state. Entering as strangers the Congregational Church, where we were accustomed to worship, we were greeted by Mr. Pickard as a deacon of the church. The opening of the Sunday school found Mr. Pickard as its superintendent, alert and interested in every